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SUBJECT: LESSONS LEARNED - CRISIS MANAGEMENT EXERCISE RIGA 2009

REF: STATE 719

¶1. Post submits the following comments, observations and lessons learned from Post's most recent Crisis Management Exercise (CME) held in Riga from 5-6 March 2009.

¶A. Format of the CME: The format in general was good. Based on our scenario (gradually developing civil unrest and evacuation), the time allotted and scenario interplay flowed appropriately. Four hours was enough time to have the EAC discuss the issues and formulate plans/actions.

¶B. Selection of Scenarios: The selection of scenarios was very appropriate for Post; the current conditions in Latvia merit consideration of just such an event. It was apparent throughout that many different sections of the Embassy may be involved in similar real-life events.

¶C. Controller's intervention and observations: The Controller, Ruth Abramson, did a good job of listening and observing throughout our exercise. She made some insightful suggestions for follow up by the EAC. Her insights as a neutral party were helpful to Post management.

¶D. What lessons did Post take from the CME: It was helpful to talk through the scenario and to identify section responsibilities at each step. Using the EAP as an on-the-spot reference document helped the EAC to stay focused on the predetermined courses of action. A high priority will be for Post to review tripwires for different stages of crisis response. We learned that we need to broaden our phone trees with both American and LE Staff information, and that we need to perform more drills, which should also include the New Embassy Compound staff and contractors.

¶E. Changes to the EAP: In addition to broadening the phone trees and reviewing tripwire, an overall review of the EAP by key personnel will help familiarize them with the document and its location online in the event of an emergency.

¶F. Most useful aspects of CMT Overview Training: Feedback on the training day was positive and the information in the presentation was very useful. Both LE Staff and Americans suggested that the addition of hands-on or interactive exercises would further improve understanding and participation. Post is in the process of following up on several areas identified as current weaknesses, to include updating our LE Staff cascade list, LES warden map list, and familiarizing all newly arrived EAC members with tripwires. The CME helped Post define priorities in order to respond to possible threats in the future. Over the course of the year we plan to develop and conduct one or more drill/exercise scenarios which will build skills identified in the CME.

¶G. Other comments: None.

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